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THE RIGHTS OF NON-CONFORMITY
—An Editorial

THE

Commonweal

Messianism and the Jew

by Arthur A. Cohen

Sex in Italian Films

by Gunnar D. Kumlien

The Novels of Radiguet

by Martin Turnell

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The Commonweal

week by week

THE RIGHTS OF NON-CONFORMITY

A FRIGHTENING thing happened to our country on June 15. On that day citizens in a number of American cities were required to take shelter during a mock thermonuclear attack. In New York City, however, twenty-nine people refused to co-operate in this test. Convinced that there is no defense against hydrogen bombs and that "Operation Alert" consequently fostered dangerous illusions, they decided they could not in conscience conform. They therefore notified public authorities in advance of their intention not to take shelter, and at the hour of the "raid" gathered in a park before the New York City Hall to stage their small protest against what they considered an attempt by the government to prepare the nation for mass-suicide.

There, in the park before New York City Hall, they were arrested, loaded into police wagons, and taken to jail. That evening they were arraigned in court. They had violated the New York State Defense Emergency Act of 1951 by refusing to take shelter during the mock air attack. Under the terms of this act their offense was a misdemeanor, but Judge Louis Kaplan called them murderers, and set their bail at fifteen hundred dollars each. Then he sent them back to jail.

Who were these people whose non-violent protest evoked the word "murder" from the magistrate and whose offense—a misdemeanor—called for such startling bail? They were a group of pacifists and conscientious objectors. They were from the Catholic Worker House of Hospitality in New York, the Protestant Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the pacifist War Resisters League. Dorothy Day and Ammon Hennacy were among the Catholic Workers; the Rev. A. J. Muste was with the Protestant group; and Bayard Rustin led members of the War Resisters League.

Here, certainly, was as unlikely a group of "murderers" as was ever assembled in an American court, but they had violated a civil defense act during a time of mock emergency, and so they met the full fury of police power and judicial recrimination. Now, released on bail, they await trial. If convicted (and, acting on principle, some of them intend to plead guilty), they face a year in prison, or a five hundred dollar fine, or both. Such, it seems, is the price of non-conformity in America today.

TWO issues—both of overwhelming importance—are involved in this story of twenty-nine people arrested, jailed, denounced from the bench, held at high bail, and now threatened with prison for conscientiously violating a public law. One issue is freedom of conscience: how far may the State go toward compelling an individual to co-operate in what he believes to be wrong? The other issue is one of constitutional procedure: to what extent may the Bill of Rights be suspended and the police power invoked against free speech and free assembly during a *mock* emergency?

The first issue—of freedom of conscience—must be faced by every American. When these twenty-nine protesters were jailed we were, in a sense, all jailed. The second issue—of constitutional procedure—must be carried, if necessary, to the nation's highest courts, for in this suspension of constitutional rights, when no *immediate* danger existed, the foundations of American freedom were jeopardized.

The saint and the radical (and they are often one and the same) share a common, ironic destiny: honored by posterity, they are usually persecuted during their lifetimes. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake; Henry David Thoreau was imprisoned. We honor the saint and we honor the radical—dead; alive we find them too uncomfortable for our tribute.

In the United States, of course, we boast of having built a haven where the saint and the radical may follow their vocations untroubled, no matter how unpopular, how "non-conformist," their vocations may be; we have nourished a tradition of dissent, and we have guaranteed this tradition

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by constitutional law. Only in a "clear and present danger," we have said, may the rights of free speech and free assembly be curtailed by the power of the State.

But now they have been curtailed by executive proclamation of a *mock* emergency. And if this can happen, what else may follow? If our traditions of freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly (the very heart of our Bill of Rights) may be so easily set aside, at what stage on the road to an authoritarian society have we arrived? Have we really traveled so far from our free beginnings? If, as in this case, our most basic freedoms may be abrogated by executive proclamation of a simulated emergency, what meaning has the Constitution in America today?

THE issues in this case seem so basic—that we expected some cry of dismay to come from the nation's press when these twenty-nine were jailed. But there was no cry; indeed, there was largely no comment. So busy were the newspapers reporting the fifteen million hypothetical casualties of the "raid" that they took little notice of the twenty-nine real casualties in the park before New York City Hall.

And few Catholic voices have been raised in protest, either, even though one of those arrested and now facing a possible prison term is Dorothy Day, one of the great witnesses to Christian charity in America today—certainly one of the great, heroic figures in the history of American Catholicism.

Dorothy Day's vocation has been a radical vocation. She has witnessed to the uncomfortable, the not "respectable," truths of Christianity. The example of her life rebukes most of us for our complacency. If a woman like Dorothy Day can be imprisoned in America for acting (out of love) as she believed she had to act, for bearing witness to the Gospel as she believed it must be witnessed to, then a terrible thing has happened to our country. And if we American Catholics, comfortable in our easy "patriotism," permit this to happen without protest and prayer, then something even more terrible has happened to us.

A society without its radicals is a dead society, just as a Church without its saints is a blighted Church. They—the non-conformists of every age—do not need us: we need them to remind us of uncomfortable truths, to rebuke our slothfulness and ease. When we dishonor them, we dishonor ourselves. If we imprison them we set shackles of mediocrity upon our own spirits. Dorothy Day—and those like her—may go to prison in any age, and they will go cheerfully, because they will still be free. But who then will deliver us? The rights of non-conformity are an index to the free society's well-being. We curtail these rights at our own great peril.

NEXT WEEK

ROBERT BARRAT writes from France about the growing unrest in Algeria.

"When I visited there last November, the Governor General's office estimated the number in revolt to be from four to five hundred. Today conservative estimates place the figure at two thousand, and even this is considerably below the real total of those involved, since the guerrillas are not alone responsible for the disorders that are taking place. When six miles of telegraph posts are cut down in a single night in the north Constantine sector, and twenty-five thousand vine stalks are pulled up by the roots in another district, an important segment of the village populations must also be involved. In spite of the reassuring words of the French authorities I cannot help wondering whether we are not about to witness the preliminaries of that war in Algeria which many thoughtful observers have been predicting for ten years. 1955 in Algeria seems in many ways the equivalent of 1946 in Indochina."

SHADOW OVER PUBLIC POWER

SOME of the more persuasive Congressional opponents of TVA, and other government hydroelectric projects, are taking a new tack. They grant certain achievements. They do not join certain of their colleagues in their cries of socialism or the preposterous claim that river valley development actually holds back the economy of a region. But they put the question to their constituents in much more direct bread-and-butter terms.

Republican Congressman Robert W. Kean of New Jersey, for example, has an affable little column in some local newspapers to explain things to his constituents. In justifying his vote against the majority recommendation of the House Appropriations Committee on the Dixon-Yates contract and the new steam plant for TVA, he makes a plausible case from a strictly local point of view.

His main query is: Why should his constituents be taxed to pay for someone else's electricity? He sees this as a particularly pointed question, as the

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low rates charged by TVA have led certain companies to move out of his Congressional district and set up shop in the Tennessee Valley. He says that these lower rates are possible because the interest TVA pays on government loans and what it pays in lieu of taxes are about one third of similar charges for private utilities. He recognizes some of the advantages accruing to the families in the Valley—they can heat their homes for as little as $70 a year—but tells his constituents he doesn't see why *they* should have to pay for it.

Similar feelings moved other Representatives—particularly those from states which have lost industries to the TVA region—in their startling rejection of the Appropriations Committee's recommendations. The *New Republic* ascribes the unexpected House action to "horse trading." It places some faith in a report that ten Republican votes for pet projects were offered for every Democratic vote switched in favor of the controversial Dixon-Yates appropriation. It states as undisputed fact that the votes were counted without an identifying roll-call, so there is no public record who the 198 Representatives were who voted against the TVA steam plant.

The argument has undoubtedly shifted since the thirties. The TVA has now emphatically demonstrated what can be done in the way of an integrated, rounded development of a major river valley. The model is now well set up—and appropriately with federal funds. Does this mean, as Admiral Ben Moreell and his associates on the Hoover Commission task force would have it, that the model should now be left to its own devices or even broken up?

The picture which Congressman Kean presents is deceptively simple. It fails to refer to the sums TVA has paid back to the government. It contrasts what TVA pays in lieu of taxes with the high taxes private utilities pay because of their high profits. It makes no reference to the invaluable nitrate fertilizers TVA produces for the benefit of other areas of the country, its strategic role in the nation's defense program, the sales there of electrical and other appliances produced in other areas, the big increases in taxes paid to the federal government by the region's residents and businesses that are now more prosperous, etc., etc. The future of the TVA affects many more than the hundred and thirty thousand families that benefit most.

Another element is the significance of the Dixon-Yates contract, which would make the TVA system dependent on forces inimical to it for some of its power. This appears to be an integral part of a more general drive to hamstring both the TVA and government-built power projects in the Northwest—eventually to turn over these sources of energy, set up for the benefit of the community, to private enterprise for private profit. That is the principal issue in the forthcoming Senate vote, rather than whether or not all of us should contribute toward supplying cheaper electricity for somebody else.

SUBVERSIVE LIST

THE Attorney General's list of subversive organizations, said the Senate Internal Security subcommittee recently, is "widely misunderstood and misapplied"; what is needed is to put its findings in "proper perspective." As far as we can see, this would mean, for one thing, using the list only as it was originally intended—as background information about various organizations so that past and present membership in them can be evaluated as part of the total pattern of a person's life.

It should be obvious that anyone who belonged to one of these organizations years before it was proscribed should not automatically be deemed subversive and hence unemployable. Over the years there must have been many persons who belonged to such organizations quite innocently, not knowing that behind a high-sounding title the Communists or the Fascists were in control. Yet if membership at any time automatically means condemnation, such innocent persons will suffer. Indeed, if the ban is extended in blanket-fashion to everyone who has ever belonged to such an organization, conceivably people who fought the Communist influence, only to lose out in the end, would automatically be blacklisted.

The possibilities of injustice in the indiscriminate use of such lists are legion. To avoid such injustice in the future, the Senate subcommittee urged the Attorney General to publish a handbook, as quickly as possible, giving additional background material about each organization. This information could then serve as a reasonably intelligent guide in the proper use of the list itself. This certainly does not seem too much to ask, and we hope, not only that this step is taken, but that all concerned will take due note of the subcommittee's larger misgivings.

DOMINION DAY AND CYPRUS

JULY First was "Dominion Day" in Canada, celebrating the adoption of its Constitution in 1867—a very important milestone in the

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progress of our great neighbor toward its present status as an independent nation in the British family pattern.

One of the most hopeful and fruitful political developments in the present period of convulsion and distress and anger has been the evolution, the organic growth of the British Commonwealth of nations. The good solutions that have been worked out in Canada and the rest of the Empire-becoming-Commonwealth, or in those nations which have chosen to become completely independent, are a source of great comfort and encouragement to those concerned with the problem.

This does not imply that the solutions, or the methods of arriving at the solutions, have been the best of all possible ones. But this is a time when long-range, ideologically patterned solutions to the formidable puzzles and mazes and knots of our present situation seem impossible for working out *in concreto*. Sometimes day-to-day plans, or year-to-year, or at best decade-to-decade, are the most that it seems reasonably possible to hope for.

It appears that it is in this good tradition that the British Government has invited Greece and Turkey to talks on the status of the Island of Cyprus. This is an about-turn for H.M. Government; under Sir Winston Churchill there was a stiff policy of refusal to "preside over the dissolution" of the Empire in general, and in particular a refusal to discuss the possibility of a change of status for Cyprus. But by his current action even the present premier, Sir Anthony Eden, has reversed himself on his former policy of refusing to discuss the problem with a foreign power.

The problem is not a simple one: Cypriotes are chiefly of Greek descent and language, and for a long while they have been demanding union with Greece. Recently, pressure for this has been stepped up, and there has been violence. Another consideration is that the island is physically nearer Turkey than it is to Greece. It was part of the Turkish empire before the British took over in 1878, and almost one-fifth of the population considers itself to be Turkish; these people are opposed to union with Greece. It is conceivable that they fear a wholesale movement of population that has been such a terrible mark of modern national and ethnic settlement of difficulties.

But the main point to be made here is one of commendation for what appears to be an effort of a powerful government to recognize the aspirations of a dependent national group to achieve a political status of its own devising. The achievement of peace depends a great deal on the deft elimination of points of tension, such as now exist in Cyprus. The burden for achieving peace rests to a great extent on leadership *in action* by those nations who have long been in the fore as leading theoreticians of liberty and peace.

OLD CONTROVERSY

THE long-awaited findings of the Commission set up by President Eisenhower to study Federal-State relationships are finally in. The report runs to three hundred pages, and it will require considerable study by all who are interested in such questions. But already there seems to be no doubt that its conclusions are sharply different from what might have been expected if Clarence Manion had continued as the Commission's chairman.

Mr. Manion's position on such matters is quite clear, and moderate does not seem to be the word for it. After Mr. Manion's connection with the Eisenhower Administration was somewhat abruptly severed, however, the work of the Commission went forward under the chairmanship of Mr. Meyer Kestnbaum, a business leader with a distinguished record in industrial relations and the head of the Committee for Economic Development. The conclusions reached under his direction seem moderate in tone, not hotly partisan or doctrinaire as opinions on this subject might have been.

At this writing, it is not yet possible to tell what the general reaction to the Commission's findings will be. Perhaps there will be little or none, for moderation, unfortunately, often fails to attract much public attention. Undoubtedly there will be many people who will feel that the report that resulted does not give enough recognition to the essential role of the Federal government; Senator Morse, for example, has already filed his dissent on this score. But those who cry "States' Rights" at every piece of social legislation are not likely to gain much comfort from it, either.

Many good points are made in the report. One in particular seems to us worth stressing here. Much of the increase in Federal power in recent decades has come as a natural consequence of the growing complexity of modern life. But part of the growth of Big Government is also due to the fact that state governments and local bodies have failed to keep up with real problems. Too often they have simply abdicated their responsibility. When real needs exist and lesser governing bodies fail to meet them, the Federal Government will necessarily step in. More recognition of this fact would make much of the controversy over Federal-State relationships unnecessary.

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Messianism and the Jew

THE SEARCH FOR DELIVERANCE, WHETHER IN TIME OR IN ETERNITY, LIES AT THE HEART OF THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

ARTHUR A. COHEN

THE term "secularism" is clear enough if it is understood as a view of all reality in terms of this world—a complete divorce of man and the things of man from spiritual values. In our age, however, "secularism" has tended to become an unfortunate weapon of religious polemic, unfortunate because of its vagueness, its frequently indiscriminate application, its sheer negativity. It is used to describe everything from too wordly ecclesiasticism to mild socio-philosophic attitudes.

In its proper sense, nevertheless, secularism is a universal phenomenon. It is found everywhere, and it has a peculiar applicability to the situation of many modern Jews. A Christian, for example, cannot be a non-believer and remain a Christian. Many Jews, however, believe with some warranty that they can be non-believers and remain Jews.

This state is made possible by virtue of the ambiguous origins and history of the Jewish people. The Jews are both religion and people. The flight to secularism is made easy for them by the enormous confusion of religious and secular ideas that form the tradition Judaism has carried through history. The confusion is not so patent or clear-cut as many Jews have made it; yet it is evident that such movements as the Jewish Socialist Verbande, the contemporary movements of emancipation, and Zionism have supplied a rich cultural and intellectual home for Jews who wish to remain Jews, but who feel quits with God.

The Jew has been consistently anomalous in this regard, for history has been for him an immediate enormity he must either encounter or succumb to. Not salvation in the next world but survival in this world has been Jewry's pressing problem. The Jew, therefore, fabricated weapons of time to sustain him in his quest for eternity. Secularism—the hope of *this* world—has always been part of Judaism.

This explains in some measure the mystery of Jewish law, its concern for detail, its practicalities, its immediacies. For what is the secular? It is that part of the world which has not been sanctified, which remains uninvested by the Holy. The secular, therefore, is not something to be abandoned or opposed, but rather to be overcome and transformed. The effort to transform it can never be the effort to sheer power, but the effort of the Holy. As such, secularism has always been a part of Jewish history—not as doctrine, or attitude, but as that part of human life which has not yet been transformed.

The phenomenon of modern Jewish secularism—of those modern Jews (some men of genius) who have abandoned all religious belief and seek only a worldly hope—is of a piece with the historic role of Israel and the Jewish people. Without an understanding, therefore, of what has happened in modern Jewish history, the reality of secularism among modern Jews is unintelligible.

MODERN European Jewry was born in Western Europe with the emancipation. Jewish emancipation unfolded in a Western and an Eastern phase. The Western phase was inaugurated with the French Revolution, repealed by the Council of Vienna, and restored and augmented by the revolutions of 1848. As a result of these historical movements the Western Jew received civil status, the right to own property, to move freely, to secure residence and employment beyond the shadow of the ghetto walls, to attend universities or to farm land according to his choice.

Eastern Jewry never experiencd such definite emancipation. Eastern Europe was terrified by the implications of the French Revolution. When Alexander II relaxed the prohibitive strictures against the Jews as a by-product of the emancipation of the serfs in 1855, he was almost immediately horrified by the liberal and revolutionary currents he believed he had excited. He therefore repealed his modest pro-Jewish policy and a program of systematic repression, more deadly than before, was instituted. It was at this juncture that Pobidenostzev, Procurator of the Holy Synod, representing the opinion of the State, proclaimed: "One-third of Russia's Jews must be converted, one-third driven to emigrate, and the last third starved to death."

Mr. Cohen has written on modern Jewish thought for *Cross Currents*, *Judaism*, and other publications.

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In measure his wish was consummated. Several million emigrated. Many thousands were massacred or converted.

One must remember that no environment, however well insulated or organized, can produce of itself a homogeneous religious community. Neither Judaism nor Christianity can assure itself that given effective education alone it can create believing Jews or Christians. There is much more that man demands. So with the Jew. Jewry was educated on the word of God, but the ghetto was an insufficient environment to insure a religious Jewry. When its walls were breached, the wind of modernity dispersed the odors of antiquity.

The major problem that faced the liberated Jew was to secure acceptance and freedom. Democracy, liberalism, socialism became the moving intellectual ideologies of Jewish emancipation, for it was these ideologies that had released the Jew from bondage. As Ludwig Borne, the nineteenth century German-Jewish writer, commented: "I, a slave from my birth, love liberty more than you; yea, because I was trained in servitude, I understand liberty better than you." It was inevitable that with emancipation being a Jew should cease to mean for many a testimony to the convenant with Abraham and Moses, but rather a sore that could be eased only by the ointments of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

MODERN Jewish secularism has many manifestations. We are not concerned with the secularism born of indolence and sheer disinterest. Jews are rarely dispassionate enough to be irreligious without elaborate reasons. The Jewish Socialist, Marxist, Communist, Yiddishist, Hebraist, Zionist has each fashioned out of his conviction a position which, to a lesser or greater degree, responds to his Jewish ancestry. Each maintains a hold, frequently tenuous, on some element of the past, building out of both love and animus a small temple in which to be at home with his alienation.

For purposes of this discussion, it may be fruitful to speak of "the Jewish Marxist," the intellectual revolutionary who is frequently uninterested in the immediacies of politics but yet believes passionately that Marxist doctrine can restore Paradise. Such a secularist is a descendant of the transformation of Israel from the community of God into the marginal citizenry of Europe. He is the emancipated Jew who carries in his memory the torments of his European past. He has forgotten the promises of God and remembers only the promises of Napoleon, Frederick the Great and Alexander II.

Such a Jew has been victimized by the fact that he has always been both a witness and a community in one. God did not allow him the luxury of singleness. The Jew historically believes that he can come to God only through the community. Yet when the West granted him freedom his attachment to the traditional community was severed. He had, therefore, to seek a new community as a focus for his idealism and his faith.

It may be asked why certain Jews, such as "the Marxist Jew" we are discussing, sought community in the company of radical ideologies. Why were they not content with more "acceptable" movements: democracy, constitutional monarchy, movements of equalitarianism?

THE answer is complex. At the outset let it be noted that the overwhelming majority have been so content. Those that remain, those who have seen their past through clouded lenses, though few, are valuable, however, by the very virtue of their extremity: they allow us to see many of the otherwise unfathomable ways of history, and the answer to their problem must necessarily be considered both in social and eschatological terms.

Socially, the Jew is an anomaly. He is always accepted and rejected in one. He is always in need of protective insulation because the world, God forgive it, is always prepared to ravage him. Some claim that Israel stands under judgment and is condemned. Judged it most certainly is; that it is condemned I cannot believe. With the emancipation, Jewry counted its hell behind it and declared the wrath of God no longer operative in history. The Jewish Marxist, however, to the extent that his Jewry survives as an anguish, still responds to the world's wrath. He insists that the "Godly" world has conspired to deprive mankind of peace, harmony, good will, well-being. He puts God on the side of the iniquitous status quo, and makes it the task of God's victims to set things finally right. This is the problem in social terms.

Eschatological considerations are more subtle. I venture mere tentative suggestions. The Jewish Marxist—or militantly anti-religious man—is, I believe, a truncated messianist, an inverted prophet. Marxism is surely a messianic doctrine. As Martin Buber has noted, collectivist ideologies take over from God the power they believe God has ceased to exercise. When Nietzsche announced the death of God at the close of the nineteenth century, he announced at the same time that henceforth man was to become God. Nietzsche, of course, did not envision Socialism or Communism as the outcome of man's new deity. Yet these ideologies are the natural home for man-become-God—for the prophet secularized. Like Biblical religion, Socialism and Communism are preoccupied with the poor, the disinherited, and the oppressed. But they have grown impatient with God and imagine that tech-

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nical and social reorganization can achieve what God did not—or could not—accomplish.

We cannot discuss the Jewish Marxist, or for that matter the Jewish secularist, unless we realize the implications of this. For the Jewish secularist God has become a social force. He sees the deliverance from Egypt as a revolutionary movement in which the Jews aligned themselves against tyranny. He views Moses as a classic prototype of the modern opponent of fascism. In effect, he makes the language of revealed history into the grammar of social discontent. He still seeks the Messiah, but now a purely secular Messiah.

THERE is a generally unknown event of modern Jewish history which may illuminate the ancestry of the militant Jewish secularist, whether he be professional Marxist or Zionist ideologue. In the middle seventeenth century, the masses of European Jewry were concentrated in Central and Eastern Europe. In the years following the disastrous Chmielnitzki pogroms of 1648, famine and economic collapse reduced the hopes of Eastern European Jewry to an illusion. Messianic speculation, nourished for centuries by the literature of the Kabbalah and the constant repetition of catastrophe, flourished once again. There arose in a relatively short space of time two pretenders to the throne of David, Sabbatai Zevi and Jacob Frank. They reveal the tension of European Jewry and the destiny of which the secular Jewish visionary is a part.

Both Sabbatai and Frank held that the advent of redemption was at hand, but that redemption could occur only when all men had become saints or sinners. Since the likelihood that all men would become saints was remote, the condition of universal evil seemed more accessible. The idea of "the holy sinner" was thus made into an ideal. It was taught that only when the Jews had passed through evil, when the good of the universe had been drained away, would God be left with no choice but to redeem the world.

Sabbatai Zevi, a fundamentally unexceptional man, announced in 1665 that he was the one to be annointed. Frank, a far more vigorous and intellectually compelling figure, entering in the wake of Sabbateanism, committed his most daring act in 1759. Both men sought the fulfillment of history in a resolute break with the past. As a result, their movements were antinomian and sectarian. It was a logical consequence of their position that they decided to commit what is, in the eyes of Israel, the greatest sin—apostasy. Sabbatai Zevi led thousands of his followers into Islam, while Jacob Frank and his admirers became Catholics.

What is relevant here is that the two sectarian movements which have altered the traditional attachments of modern European Jews, Sabbateanism and Marxism, have many parallels. Both have many forms, many off-shoots. In essence, all movements which seek to attract the Jew from his traditional allegiance must be messianic movements if they are to succeed. They must seek to speed up the divine process, to hasten God along to the millenium.

Both Sabbateanism and the varied forms of Marxism seek the immediate actualization of a transformed world. If the Messiah is not sent willingly into the world he must be forced into it. The Messiah of Sabbateanism restores the Jews to Zion, lifts them out of the Diaspora, grants them power, insures ecstacy, releases them from the woes of time. Eliminate "bourgeois-nationalist" sentiments and the Jewish Marxist is a simple messianist too. Both movements expect the parousia: the one from religious impurity and sin, the other from social evil and degeneracy.

WHAT then is claimed: what are the consequences? European Jews who became Marxist or Secularist revolutionaries had, in almost every case, a vivid sense of their Jewish ancestry. For the Jew has not been emancipated very long. His memories of the ghetto are not centuries old: they are embarrassingly recent. There was for the Jews no humanist renaissance mediating between feudalism and the modern world. The Jew of the twentieth century remembers in his lifetime the experience of the ghetto, whether it be a physical ghetto or the intellectual and emotional ghetto that survived much longer. It is only the most "modern" Jew who has forgotten the Bible or the prayer-book. By and large he knows quite immediately what for centuries the Jews of history have passed through and hoped for.

Berdyaev, in *The Russian Idea,* refers to the Jewish people as the only people, besides the Russian, who are by nature apocalyptist and messianist. What he explores in terms of Russian history and thought he discerns in the formation of modern Jewish history. Like the Russian, the Jew thinks out of the heart of his own misery and anticipates redemption. The parallelism of Levi Yitzhak, the saint of Berditchev, praying for God to redeem the nations of the world even if the price of redemption be the continued subjugation of Israel, and the ideology which Jewish emancipation released into the world is patent.

True messianist or false messianist, the Jewish intellectual, if he is Jewish, is a messianist. This, I believe, is the heart of the Jewish experience. If this experience is diverted, turned away from God, directed toward the immediacies of time and the social process, it should cause no surprise that the Jew becomes, on occasion, an agitator or revolutionary. If his experience is open to God, balmed with patience and attentiveness, it is the messianism of the psalmist: Truly my soul waits upon God, from Him comes my salvation.

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FROM ITALY

Sex in Italian Films

Rome

CAN sexiness rise to a form of art? Is the perfection of a woman's body and its attractiveness sufficient in itself, quite independently of acting capacities, for it to be considered of artistic value, comparable to good acting, good film directing and good photographing? Or is sexiness of that kind just shameless exploitation under the pretense of art, to be judged like any other pornography?

Such questions have recently been raised quite seriously here by critics, actors and film directors. Italian films seem to be running the risk of being smothered in more and more female perfection; they are to an increasing degree loaded with explosive sexiness, while at the same time they contain less and less talent. Naturally, all this has encouraged those who are in favor of more regulation, and now the threat, at least, of severe government censorship is hanging over everybody like a sword of Damocles.

It is argued that we in our age, whatever our other faults, are at least more sincere than our grandfathers and great-grandfathers, with their elaborate Puritanical ignoring of the facts of life. It is said that with sex education, Kinsey reports, and the scientific approach we have at least killed hypocrisy. But I cannot help remembering the innocent child in one of the tales of Andersen, who said that the Emperor was naked and thus shocked all the grownups who were busy admiring His Majesty's extraordinary, but really invisible, new clothes. If such a child should look at us today, I think its comments might often be most embarrassing. This is particularly true when censorship of films for moral reasons is concerned, and from that point of view the Italian case has some specially interesting aspects.

First of all, I should say that the risk of more severe government censorship in Italy in the near future should not be exaggerated. One should always keep in mind the fact that everything in Italy is fleeting and fluid and that nothing in this unusual country seems ever to be definitive. The present censorship is based on legislation which has remained unchanged since the Fascist regime. It is rather elastic and it has not prevented the Italian film directors from making some of the boldest and most interesting experiments carried out in any country since the end of the war.

The new code, drawn up by Under Secretary Scalfaro and based on "Fatherland, Religion and the Home," has been criticized in many Catholic quarters and is widely looked upon as something mainly demagogic. Actually, it would not even be necessary to draw up a new code. It would be sufficient to apply the old Fascist one, which is not too Fascist, since it has been able to survive in a Democratic regime.

As for Under Secretary Scalfaro himself, many Italians consider him a bit too "fanatic" on the subject. Last year, for example, he attracted considerable attention when in a restaurant on one hot evening he asked a well known lady to have a minimum of decency and cover bare shoulders and a very deep neckline. The attacks against his proposals on the films are not coming from the Communists. In this field they are cautious, letting the Socialists play the first fiddle, as the censorship they apply in the countries where they are in power is ten times worse than the one proposed by Mr. Scalfaro. His proposal, however, did provide a welcome occasion for Italy's most famous film directors, actors and scriptwriters to react against censorship as a matter of principle. And the fact that they were backed up in their efforts by the leftist press was just a routine demagogic countermove against Under Secretary Scalfaro.

THE problem goes deeper than the nature of the public controversy would indicate. For a long time the foremost film directors and actors, as well as some of the least Puritanical Catholics outside the industry, have been acutely conscious of it. The question was prompted first by Gina Lollobrigida. Enthusiastic American film critics have said about her that she has "the helpless beauty of a dark little nymph, who seems to wake up the satyr in men." But she is not only beautiful; she undoubtedly has talent and is working hard trying to improve herself. It is the newer generation of Italian film actresses who have made the problem acute, for they seem to be more beautiful and less and less talented. The amazing thing is that the lack does not seem to matter as far as success goes. It seems sufficient for them just to *be*.

During the Italian film week in London recently this state of affairs was obvious enough. The new generation of Italian film stars gave the British public a real shock. Their physical perfection and their provoking sexiness were compared to the qualities possessed by the cool, pale local beauties, and the discussions were carried on as gravely as if in an academy. If somebody spoke of talent, it was in the nature of a kindness, for even the most indulgent critic could not find any. It did not really seem to matter, and the girls did not really seem to care. They were just beautiful, in the same way as tropical butterflies or birds of paradise.

In Rome I have been to see a few of the most prominent among them, Sophia Loren, Maria Frau and

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Silvana Pampanini. Usually film actresses look less glamorous in reality than on the screen. With these three, it was the other way around: they look extremely glamorous on the screen, but are still more glamorous in reality. People who are in a position to compare say that they surpass the Hollywood beauties, Ava Gardner and Marilyn Monroe, for example, because they are less sophisticated and artificial and therefore more womanly. All three of them are masterpieces of nature, and critics in Italy do not bother to talk of talent where they are concerned.

THAT precisely is the dilemma. It does not seem to be necessary any more for actresses like these to have talent. Almost everyone concerned would now admit that it is quite sufficient for them to show the classic lines of their faces and their perfect bodies as much as possible—as if their beauty in itself were a form of art in its own right, quite independent of other considerations.

It has been pointed out that this is nothing new in Italy. Exactly the same phenomenon existed during the Renaissance, for example. Then, as now, the extraordinarily vital and beautiful Italian people produced these masterpieces of nature. In those days such girls often became, by virtue of the very beauty of their bodies, what was called *"cortigiane,"* courtesans, which was a polite way to say prostitutes. Not ordinary prostitutes, mind you, but luxury prostitutes, loved by kings and princes, inspiring poets and very often famous forever because they served as models for the great Italian masters like Titian, Tintoretto or Giorgione and many others.

These young women, like many present-day film stars, had nothing to offer except their beauty, and nobody asked anything more of them than to be what they were, fragile living works of art. But their contemporaries were less hypocritical than we are and did not call them artists.

All this, it may be objected, has little to do with the controversy over these masterpieces of nature. But even if one considers the matter exclusively from the artistic point of view, where will the rising tide of sexiness in the Italian film world lead in the long run? Naturally there will be more and more of it, since it is the only thing which invariably seems to pay. Already the tendency is clear, and the really gifted Italian actors and actresses are worried, since many of them have been pushed aside. They see a great danger in it for themselves, and also a risk of degeneration of the entire Italian film industry. The innocent child in the tale of Andersen might have some most embarrassing things to say about the concept of art which has brought things to such a state. GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

THE SCREEN

SCALPEL-AND-SOAP OPERA

IT seems odd for the maker of such thought-provoking movies as "Home of the Brave," "High Noon," "The Wild One" and "Member of the Wedding" to turn up with a glorified soap opera. Because no matter how you slice it (and slicing it is what it needed in the cutting room), the plot of "Not As a Stranger" is straight soap opera. It's about a young medical student who has an obsession to be a great doctor; nothing else in life counts. He marries a nurse only because she has enough dough to pay for his education. And, my, how she suffers! He's bitter toward his father, unnecessarily cruel to his closest friend, who performs a wrong operation, and he doesn't love his wife or want her to have children. This medical martinet finally learns, after he becomes a small-town doctor and makes a mistake costing a life, that a doctor must have heart as well as brain and that you can't "practice medicine," you have to "treat people."

Although Stanley Kramer's production of "Not As a Stranger" is quite handsome, especially in the stunning black-and-white photography, his direction of the good cast has little depth and exposes the thinness of the script which Edna and Edward Anhalt fashioned from the novel by Morton Thompson. Robert Mitchum plays the lead role in a sort of stunned lethargy that hardly suggests the brainy student of medicine, but does convey the idea that as teacher-doctor Broderick Crawford warns, he ought to stop living his life like a Greek tragedy. Olivia de Havilland is effective as the efficient nurse and long-suffering wife who pays and pays for loving her heartless and ambitious husband too much. Gloria Grahame gives a competent but conventional performance as the wealthy, alcoholic patient who lures Dr. Mitchum into adultery. (For this unsavory episode, Stanley Kramer uses clichés that even the soap bubble boys have discarded.) Outstanding in this large cast are Frank Sinatra, as Mitchum's ill-treated friend, and Charles Bickford, as the general practitioner whose assistant Mitchum becomes and who is the most likeable person in the whole film. Perhaps that is the main trouble with "Not As a Stranger"—no one except Bickford has any warmth or succeeds in winning our sympathy. The picture is as clinically cold as some of the operating scenes with which Kramer has decorated the plot so generously, but it doesn't use its scalpels to show us what its people are really like.

NOT having read Anya Seton's novel on which the movie of "Foxfire" was based, I can't tell how closely the film follows the original, but it does leave

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much to be desired. Ketti Frings' script proposes an interesting problem in miscegenation and then wastes it by confusing the issue with padding that results in a run-of-the-mill movie. Jane Russell plays a wealthy socialite with just the right devil-may-care flare; and Jeff Chandler is properly strong, silent and masterful as the half-Indian who falls in love with her and leads her to the altar in spite of misgivings about the incompatibility of their backgrounds. Perhaps if left alone during a healthy period in which time and love and understanding could work their magic, this couple could have worked out their problems without going through so much woe.

But neither Jane nor Jeff are fully grown-up and when her mother (Frieda Inescourt) and his friend (Dan Duryea) and several other people interfere with the twosome, the picture becomes a mere silly brawl which Director Joseph Pevney doesn't help by guiding his cast so superficially. Actually the two leads are quite attractive, and you almost expect them to act their ages when Jane visits an Apache village and has a talk with Jeff's mother; but Jeff proves slow about coming half way, too. I'm sorry "Foxfire" went off on so many tangents. Its subject is worth serious treatment.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE WINTER DEAD

(for J. D. in peace)

CATHERINE, New England winter's settled in
To stay: snow fills the fenced-in pasture land,
Banks high beside the road. The cobble walls
I followed in the spring now run their white
Unbroken fingers through the trees, lost
In the undistinguishable maze. Rabbits,
Sometimes deer still struggle across fields.

Here we must huddle closer to our homes.
The frozen children stamp and hold their hands
Before the thinning fires near the pond,
Hear the ice that cracks beneath the feet
And seals the skater in its vault forever.

In the streets of Boston your Father died
Alone today. The shoppers, cold and startled,
Waited the wailing ambulance to break
The storm of traffic, then hurried on their way.

He too had seen the winters come and stay,
The birches yielding under the ice's weight,
The birds that wander hungry into shrubs.
And in this city he has seized his rest:
Where winter ended for him, we remain.

JAMES F. COTTER, S.J.

OF NOTE

CATHOLICS AND THE COMMON GOOD

THE Spring issue of *Thought,* the Fordham University Quarterly (441 East Fordham Road, New York 58, N. Y.), carries a four-part article on "The Common Good," Part II of which, "The Practical Judgment," by the Rev. Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, S. J., of the Fordham faculty, is here reprinted in full:

Even as schoolboys we learn to memorize that the primary function of government is the promotion of the common good. It would be very pleasant if we could learn as easily by rote what the common good is in any particular situation. It is easy to define the common good philosophically. But to define sociologically just what social arrangement will give the general idea its concrete expression is a much more difficult problem, one that requires vision, insight, greatness of mind. St. Thomas remarked that, in particular instances, only the just man could really say what a just act would be. The general principles can guide a person; they can never automatically determine for him the action which promotes the common good. In a dynamic, changing world, it is only the just man who can really decide, and he cannot always be absolutely sure he is correct.

This truth needs vigorous restatement today in view of the great uncertainties which Catholics must face in working for the common good. More than ever there is need of vigorous and courageous decision; more than ever must this decision be made in the face of uncertainties; more than ever do men need the virtues of the just man who can decide, not on the basis of an infallible certitude, but on the basis of a prudent judgment, what seems to be the just act in a given situation.

The extent of the uncertainties should be quite clear. We are living in a rapidly changing world, marked by striking innovations—whether it is planning space ships, applying atomic energy, or preparing anti-fertility pills; it is a world marked by extensive communication of ideas, contact of different cultures, conflicting interests on a global scale. Thus one repeatedly faces the problem: shall priests become workers; shall segregation laws be flouted; shall traditional forms of paternalism be rooted out with the risk of shattering a social structure in order to achieve more personal liberty; shall workers be helped to greater political power; shall one promote the glory of God by tolerating a situation of tyranny, rather than resorting to revolt against the tyranny; how does one adjust the practices of the Catholic Faith to the customs of a pagan culture? These and a thousand other situations call for action and decision. In many cases there are few *precedents;* there is distressing lack of adequate information; there is the rapid unfolding of

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new social phenomena. In many cases there are few *alternatives,* and no one of them completely desirable. In most cases, time is running out. This is the context within which social policy must be determined and decisions for action must be made. There are principles to guide, but there are no principles that will infallibly guarantee the right concrete action for the common good. Here there is need of the judgment of the just man, guided by prudence, and one can never have absolute certitude that he is right.

This does not mean that sound and certain judgments about the common good are not possible. They are. If an employer prevents the organization of his employees because he claims they have no right to organize, he is asserting a practical judgment that is morally wrong. If he opposes their organization because he is convinced that this particular union in these particular circumstances would hinder the interests of the employees rather than help them, he is making a practical judgment which is open to question and dispute. The validity of his judgment will depend on a number of factors: (a) the extent of his information about the actual situation; (b) his complete grasp of the nature of the moral principle involved and his sincere determination to fulfill it; (c) that sense of the just thing to do which springs from a combination of this information, this high moral purpose, and an insight into the real significance of the issues involved. One of the most stirring examples of this type of judgment is perhaps the letter of Cardinal Gibbons to Cardinal Simeone setting forth the reasons why the Knights of Labor should not be condemned. In his opposition to many other members of the American Hierarchy at the time, he showed a wonderful command of the relevant information, a fine awareness of the moral principles involved, and insight into the relationship of the principles to the practical situation at hand. The Cardinal was on controversial ground, but history has eloquently indicated the justice of his practical judgment.

In the presence of uncertainty, then, how do issues become resolved? In the first place, the common consensus of sincere men, learned in moral principles and competently informed in the field, would be one strong norm for the common good. This appears to be the case with the question of firm policies of desegregation in the United States. It appears to be the case in the rather general consensus that co-management is not desirable in the United States at the present time.

However, this is not the area of the greatest problem. That occurs when consensus does not prevail, or where competent information is lacking, or where sincerity is questionable, but where interested people assert their practical judgment as if it were eternal truth. This is the danger presented by those who desire to impose a social policy as if it were part of the deposit of Faith. It is the danger of those Catholics among whom a program becomes a "line," an opinion becomes an "ideology," and a practical judgment becomes an infallible dogma by which to proclaim as excommunicated all those who do not conform.

This is a terribly serious danger because, in the presence of rapid social change, a practical policy which is right and just today may not be right and just tomorrow. Secondly, the man who makes the judgment might judge differently if he had more information; but under the pressure of events, he may have had to judge and act before adequate information was available to him or to anyone else. Thirdly, it often happens that only the unfolding of events reveals whether a judgment was right or wrong, sometimes whether it was just or unjust.

Therefore it is apparent how careful Catholics must be in trying to arrive at a policy for the common good in the presence of uncertainties. The right to opinion must be carefully guarded; the right to objection carefully supported; and people must neither be read out of the Church for matters of practical judgment in the midst of uncertainty, nor given a false sense of security by being led to believe that their disputable programs enjoy the validity of an article of Faith.

There are two very serious consequences to this danger. There is always the possibility that the Church may become identified with a temporary program, a concrete social policy, a particular culture, and thus suffer in her catholic apostolate to all men. She must be tireless in her work for justice for the workingmen, but she must never be exclusively the Church of the workingmen. She must be relentless in having the dignity of Black and Yellow and White acknowledged by the whole world, but she must never be exclusively the Church of the Negro any more than she is the Church of the White. If the Church should ever become the "bourgeois" Church, or the "Church of the West," if it should ever allow itself to be identified with a particular culture, or a particular social form, it would cease to be the Church, One and Catholic, capable of making all men one as the children of God—while allowing them to be remarkably different as the children of men.

The second consequence to this danger mentioned above is the tendency to cast a moral judgment against those who do not agree with the particular policy, or who do not conform to the program. Bitterness then takes the place of the greatness of mind that marks the man of wisdom and understanding. One is no longer "Catholic" if he does not accept a practical program. What is more, if events prove that he was wrong, his own practical judgment may be condemned as a moral fault, when it was nothing more than a sincere but erroneous judgment. The just man must not only be just, he must be infallible also, this dangerous assumption would seem to say.

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The difficulties in arriving at a practical judgment about the common good must not deter the Catholic from constantly striving for it. It is important that he avoid the other equally dangerous extreme of refusing to make any decisions at all because circumstances may prove that he was wrong. Such a person would obviously run the risk of sinning against the virtue of fortitude. And, although inaction is often rationalized as the practice of prudence, it is often the opposite of prudence. The enemy may have built his house on our plot of land while we are still carefully counting our bricks.

However, the least that the Catholic can expect in striving for a judgment on the common good is an environment which encourages him to be alert and courageous. It will be acknowledged that he is a man, not God; he will be assured that his proposals will be discussed and questioned on their merits, not dismissed without examination as a sinful heresy. Only in such a dynamic, forward-looking effort will the common good of the Church and society be served well.

COMMUNICATIONS

CHRISTIAN CULTURE

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO the Editors: As another amateur in the field of education and, like Mr. Cogley, a graduate of a Catholic college, perhaps it may be permitted to me to comment upon certain of his recent criticisms of Christopher Dawson's proposals for the study of Christian culture.

First, let me express my disappointment at the tone in which the article by Mr. Cogley was written. Certainly it is to be hoped that the same openness to new viewpoints which has characterized The Commonweal in relation to political and social affairs will not be abandoned in the field of education, even though all of its editors should be graduates of Catholic colleges and therefore inclined to defend their old school tie with its sentimental associations. As to the specific points made by Mr. Cogley, I think the following ones merit particular consideration.

(1) Is it Mr. Cogley's contention that Catholic education at the present day prepares the average student for assimilating "what is good and true in Marx, Freud and Einstein," while the Dawson program of studies would prevent the development of such ability? For many like myself who are acquainted with a fairly wide cross section of Catholic college graduates, it is indeed surprising to learn that such are the results achieved by our present system of education. Nor do I think the modern Catholic need be quite so fearful as Mr. Cogley is that the study of the historic realities of Christian thought and culture will render him incapable of understanding the views of Einstein, Freud and Marx. It is surely not a Catholic attitude to assume that the study of St. Augustine bars one from comprehending the significance of Freud.

(2) Does Mr. Cogley hold that the present epoch in civilization is no less Christian than any other age in history, in other words, that the development of a general attitude of anthropocentrism in the last few centuries simply has had no effect on the society in which it developed? Does he believe that any judgment which characterizes the Middle Ages as dominated by a different spirit from our own is merely the result of a subjective idealization of the ages of Faith? If so, perhaps he will tell us why so many secular historians are willing to discern a basic difference between medieval and modern civilization, which he for one is unable to discover.

(3) Does Mr. Cogley consider it an accident that he has to refer to St. Thomas Aquinas as an outstanding example of the Christian theologian, while he can speak largely about expanding the frontiers of theology in our own day but is strangely silent about those graduates of American Catholic colleges who are carrying forward the work? Does he consider it an accident that so many Catholic writers of the present day are not born Catholics, and therefore have been forced to do without the benefits of the education he received? Does this suggest anything about a reorientation needed in the system of education now in force at our colleges and universities?

(4) Does the study of the history and literature of other epochs than our own provide us a sure indication that the student so employed is not "a man of his own time and place," but is "sodden with nostalgia for another era"? If such is the case, Mr. Cogley can look down from the heights of his modernity upon the benighted students in secular universities like Chicago, Harvard and Columbia, a very large part of whose liberal education is devoted to the study of literature and history other than that of the modern age. It may be satisfying for a Catholic to adopt this attitude of cultural superiority; but does it make sense for a member of a Church rooted in the historical development of mankind so to despise the significance of the past?

(5) What are we to make of the statement with which Mr. Cogley concludes his barrage against historical studies: "I take it that the Christian man, culturally speaking, is . . . a man of his own time and place. Today that means a man with the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the rise of Democracy and the Industrial Revolution behind him and with the Age of the Atom ahead of him." Are we

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to infer from this that the modern Christian, "culturally speaking," no longer has any connection with the events in his past, so that like the Marxist, he is a new man, severed of all ties with the generations that went before him? Or is it to be assumed that through some blindly operating process like osmosis the Christian has extracted all the good possible from historical developments and does not require a rational understanding of their significance for him? And is it with this same spirit of sublime indifference to reason and boundless confidence in physical forces that he now awaits the culture of "the Age of the Atom"?

(6) Finally, with regard to the democratic equality of natural insights in Freud and in St. Thomas Aquinas, surely the work of St. Thomas Aquinas and the Christian Fathers is of greater value for Catholic education than the work of Sigmund Freud. What one is concerned with in any system of education is not merely the particular insights to be found, but the total view of reality communicated by an author's work. Once this fact is realized, it is impossible any longer to reject a hierarchy of values or to ignore the fact that Christian culture is based upon historic realities and not upon an intellectual dilettantism (which is what the picking and choosing of natural insights would inevitably result in).

JOHN J. MULLOY.

"TRADE, AID, AND THE FARMER"

Collegeville, Minn.

TO the Editors: In his letter [May 20] taking exception to our article on "Trade, Aid, and the Farmer," Father Vincent Hope expressed an attitude which seems rather prevalent among Catholic social leaders: namely, a distrust of economic efficiency. He maintains that such a yardstick may "be perfectly valid in assessing the worth of industrial and commercial activities," but is "quite inadequate" when applied to the ancient profession of farming.

We certainly agree that it is not the only norm; there are times when it conflicts with and must cede to higher values, just as in all other walks of life. But this is not to say that efficiency is necessarily or even normally incompatible with the attainment of the cultural and moral values associated with farming. In fact, it is often precisely because he esteems these values that the farmer seeks to operate his farm efficiently.

The farmer who uses a tractor for contour plowing, who regularly analyzes his soil and applies properly balanced fertilizers, who uses the latest chemicals to control plant and animal diseases, and who studies the market to ascertain what products consumers want most, is guided by the norm of economic efficiency. But at the same time, he can be preserving the fertility of the soil for future generations, stepping up the education of his children from eight to twelve grades, taking active part in parish and community activities, and lightening the family labor with labor-saving machinery, while reducing the work week from sixty to possibly fifty-four hours per week. These and similar developments are the result of efficiency in farming. Most people would like to see more of it.

Father Hope seems to think that because of the alleged over-emphasis on efficiency, the family-sized farm is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. We should like to point out that there is less danger of the family farm passing out of the picture by becoming too large than by becoming too small. In 1950 there were only about 121,000 farms, or slightly over two per cent of the total, of 1000 acres and over, but over half of the 5.4 million farms were too small to make full use of the family labor and provide a decent living for the farm family. On these 2,848,000 undersized farms, the net cash income from all sources was less than $2000. Over 1,500,000 farm families earned net incomes from all sources of less than $1000. It is hard to see why people should be urged to stay on farms like these.

And the fact of the matter is, they are not staying. There has been a high degree of correlation between the volume of oratory devoted to urging young people to stay on farms and net migration from farms. From 1935 through 1944, net migration from farms totalled nearly ten million. After two years in which the drift was the other way, because of demobilization and closing of defense plants, the process was resumed and net migration from farms has averaged over a million persons per year since 1947. People on farms now number less than twenty-two million, or about thirteen per cent of the population.

This process has been going on for over a century in industrialized countries. A family-sized farm of 1910 would be utterly unable to compete with a true family-sized farm of 1955. But the family farm is still with us; it has merely increased in size from an average of 148 acres in 1920 to an average of 215 in 1950. The result is that the productivity of farm workers has more than doubled and workers are released for the production of goods other than the biological necessities of life—education, durable consumers' goods, works of art, express highways, atomic energy.

Why shouldn't young people who see no future as under-employed workers on undersized farms be given the opportunity to take vocational training which will equip them to produce these goods and services which are so much in demand? And why shouldn't social and religious leaders help them to establish homes in which the values of rural living can be realized? With our improving means of transportation and dwindling

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work week, it is becoming less and less true that "finding jobs in industry" is identical with "joining the urban masses in our overcrowded cities."

(*The Rev.*) MARTIN E. SCHIRBER, O.S.B.
EMERSON HYNES.

St. Paul, Minn.

TO THE EDITORS: After reading Father Hope's comments [May 20] on "Trade, Aid, and the Farmer," one who has recently ceased the active practice of farming as such is encouraged to further comment. Father Hope's exception to the validity of applying the "maximum economic return for a minimum of effort expended" principle to agriculture as its basic criterion of efficiency is more than just. But may not the same exception be made when this principle is applied, to the exclusion of all other values, to any industrial or commercial activity? Agriculture, due in great part to the complexity of method involved in producing living materials, is merely the last great segment of industry to yield to this principle. As this change in farm living is today taking place with such rapidity, the effect of this principle on an industry is heightened for us who weren't around to observe its effect on clothing and metal fabrication. Today, when possibly the worship of efficient production is not the faith of every vocal element of society, the increasingly accelerated disappearance of the family-sized farm may give us all pause to reconsider the values lost in the passing of other family- or country-sized enterprises.

In view of the authoritative statements cited by Father Hope, and the obvious reasoning from observation of natural cause and effect, some suggestions from a sometime farmer may not be inappropriate. In his letter, Father Hope ends with an implication of land reform. His linking of the foreign and domestic problems, though, should not lead us to believe that the two situations have too much in common—yet. American farms can be readily purchased, stocked, and equipped—if one has the money. One has only to live in an American farm community to observe the tremendous transfer of farm land within a comparatively small area—say a county—as evidenced by auction notices, real estate listings and common gossip. The same cannot be said to be a characteristic of Asiatic and European agriculture. There the problem is quite different.

In this country, reform should take on more of a purely financial nature. Greater availability of credit to those qualified to operate farms at easier terms, and a halting and reversing of the present price squeeze on the farmer would be of primary material assistance in maintaining and increasing the smaller type holding. A new emphasis in the educational area of agriculture is also of great necessity. Let production per unit of land rather than production per unit of labor or per unit of operation become the criterion of good management (not to the exclusion of these other factors, of course). Farming has long been characterized by personal ownership and operation. We are accustomed to thinking of it as a proprietorship or partnership. Yet the success of large corporative enterprises in certain areas of agriculture should open our eyes to some of the advantages this type of financial organization may offer. To a number of qualified individuals on a much smaller scale who may be more interested in the less tangible values of agriculture it could offer a solution to financing a farm venture. It would not seem an unreasonable experiment.

Above and beyond these educational and economic adjustments that may help to maintain and increase the family-size holdings, a revitalization of Christian and natural principles among our rural people and their leaders must occur. In many areas this evidently exists to a high degree. But the rising ratio of rural juvenile delinquency to that of urban is not a healthy sign, nor are many more subtle indications, not so easily packaged in statistics, an awareness of which can only be gained by experiencing several years in a rural community.

So many acres are needed to provide the required margin of profit, after operating expenses, in order to supply the farm family with the necessities of life not directly available from the land. As the word "necessities" assumes quotation marks, a larger and larger margin of profit, requiring a disproportionate increase in acres, becomes apparent. A vision other than that supplied by the networks, would seem essential.

FRANCIS J. COYLE.

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MOTHER KATHARINE DREXEL

59 Park Ave.
Bronxville, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I am at present preparing to write the life story of Mother Katharine Drexel, Foundress of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People, and would be grateful for letters from her or personal anecdotes about her.

KATHERINE BURTON.

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The Novels of Raymond Radiguet

MARTIN TURNELL

AMONG the French youth who crowded the smart Paris cocktail bars at the end of the First World War, observers noticed a tall, pale young man whose gravity contrasted strangely with the feverish good-timing of his friends and was probably accentuated by the monocle which would never stay in his eye. For though the young man went the rounds and seemed to indulge in the same follies as the other young men of his age, you felt that he did not really belong to their set. "What a strange hard look he gave his companions," exclaims one writer. "It was a little short-sighted and seemed to be turned inwards, as though he were secretly irritated not so much by frivolity as by the imposture it concealed."

Raymond Radiguet—for he was the young man—was born in June, 1903, and died of typhoid fever in December, 1923. He had published a volume of poetry called *Les Joues en feu* ("Flaming Cheeks") at the age of seventeen. His first novel appeared shortly before his death under the title of *Le Diable au corps* ("The Devil in the Flesh"). The second, *Le Bal du comte d'Orgel* ("Count d'Orgel Opens the Ball"), was published posthumously in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* for June and July 1924. "His death," wrote M. Jean Cocteau tantalizingly, "robbed us of his memoirs, three short stories, a vast appendix to *Le Diable au corps* . . . and *Charles d'Orléans,* an historical tableau which would have been as purely imaginative as the false autobiography of his first novel."

We need not linger over Radiguet's verse. It reveals a feeling for language and a personal irony, but much of it is derivative and there is nothing to suggest that the author would have made his mark as a poet. The novels are a different matter. They seem to me to be two of the most striking and precocious novels ever produced by a young man, but though they have both been translated they are not nearly as widely known in Anglo-Saxon countries as they deserve to be.

RADIGUET wrote *Le Diable au corps* between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. He elected to speak in the first person and in spite of M. Cocteau's disclaimer, it is difficult not to feel that it contains a strong autobiographical element. A schoolboy of fourteen is introduced by his father (who turns out to be a *père complaisant*) to a girl of nineteen who is engaged to a soldier. Marthe marries Jacques who returns to the front. The schoolboy seduces the wife, or rather they seduce one another. A son is born, and Marthe dies in childbed. The husband suspects nothing. Only the boy and his father know.

This bald summary gives little idea of the power of the book or its extraordinary impact on the sensitive reader. It is not sensational or salacious—there is indeed a curious austerity about it—as it certainly might have been in less skilful hands. The style has the gray neutral tones of the prose of Laclos' *Dangerous Acquaintances,* and the psychological insight inherited from a great tradition.

"It was as a child that I behaved in an adventure which would have embarrassed a grown man," says the narrator in the opening paragraph. In this sentence the author reveals one of his own secrets. It is not merely that he tells the story of an adolescent love affair that ends in tragedy with a power and restraint which would have done credit to an established writer. His peculiar achievement lies in the veracity with which he presents a child's vision of the world, and his refusal to allow the naked vision to be toned down or blurred by empty moralizing or literary artifice. It is because he writes with the child's vividness and directness, and because he displays the child's ruthless disregard for other peoples' feelings that the book is so disturbing. There is something disconcerting about the spectacle of Marthe tossing her soldier husband's letters unread into the fire, and about the occasion on which the narrator arrives unexpectedly during the night in Marthe's bedroom:

" 'Marthe?' I whispered.

" 'Rather than give me a fright like that,' she answered, 'you might have put off coming till the morning. You've got your leave a week early then?'

"She thought I was Jacques."

Thus the newly wedded wife whose husband is expected home on leave from the front.

The narrator sees some of Marthe's water-colors before he meets the girl herself and in recalling them he remarks, with the child's frightening candor:

"The water-colors were in no way outstanding. You felt the presence of the diligent pupil at the drawing school, putting out her tongue and licking her brushes."

Mr. Turnell, a frequent contributor to The Commonweal, is the author of *The Novel in France* and *Baudelaire.*

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When he helps her to buy furniture for her flat before the wedding he observes:

"Her fiancé's taste was for Louis XV. Marthe's bad taste was of a different kind. She would rather have gone in for the Japanese style . . . I had contrived, step by step, to transform a love match or rather a passing fancy, into a marriage of reason. And what a marriage of reason! For reason played no part in it."

The sobriety and restraint of Radiguet's style and the complete absence of sensationalism make the climax extraordinarily moving:

"A man whose life has been disorderly, and who without suspecting it is going to die, suddenly takes it into his head to put all his affairs in order. His life undergoes a change. He sorts his papers. He gets up early and goes to bed in good time. He gives up his vices, and the people with whom he lives congratulate themselves. This makes his brutal death seem all the more unjust. *He was going to be happy.*

"In the same way the new atmosphere of calm in which I lived was the condemned man's suit. I thought I had become a better son because I had one of my own. Now my tenderness brought me closer to my father and mother because something in me knew that I should soon need theirs.

"One day at lunch time my brothers arrived back from school shouting that Marthe was dead.

"The lightning which strikes a man is so swift that he does not suffer, but for those who are with him he is a sorry sight. While I felt nothing, my father's face changed. He pushed my brothers out of the room. 'Go away,' he stuttered. 'You're crazy, crazy.' Next, just as the whole of his life passes before the eyes of a dying man, I suddenly saw how monstrous my love was. Because my father was weeping, I sobbed. Then my mother took charge of me."

IT is commonly assumed that Radiguet's second novel is superior to his first. I do not altogether share this view. *Le Diable au corps* is a unique book. The novelist analyzes the successive stages of an adolescent love affair with a seriousness, a penetration, and a maturity which had previously only been applied to the study of the affairs of adults; and this gives the book the same sort of finality as Alain-Fournier's *The Wanderer*. *Le Bal du comte d'Orgel* is a fascinating performance, but though it appears in some ways subtler and more mature than *Le Diable au corps* it does not possess the freshness and spontaneity of that work. It is far more 'literary', and the novelist leans heavily on his model.

A young man named François de Séryeuse is introduced to Count Anne d'Orgel and his wife, Mahaut, and soon becomes one of their best friends. He falls in love with the Countess, but though his love is returned and everybody thinks that he has received "the final favors" they do not yield. It is a study not simply of chaste love, but of a love which remains chaste in spite of the disappearance of traditional sanctions. And we feel inclined to remark: "The Duke de Nemours and the Princess de Clèves under different names." For what Radiguet attempted to do was to re-write Madame de La Fayette's *Princess de Clèves* in the setting of the post-war world.

It is interesting to compare Madame de La Fayette's description of the Duke de Nemours with Radiguet's portrait of the Count d'Orgle:

"The prince was one of nature's masterpieces. Although he was the most striking and the handsomest man in the world, these were among the least admirable of his qualities. What placed him above everyone else was his incomparable bravery, and a charm of mind, appearance and behavior which has never belonged to anybody but him."

"Count Anne d'Orgel was young: he had only just turned thirty. To explain his celebrity (*gloire*), or at least the extraordinary position he had made for himself, would be rather difficult. His name played no great part in it, for talent comes first even with those who are hypnotized by a name. It must be admitted, however, that his qualities were merely those of his family, and that his gifts were purely social."

RADIGUET does not believe in his age as Madame de La Fayette believed in hers, and his hesitant—deliberately hesitant—voice sounds like a mocking echo of her clear, measured tone. For there is immense conviction behind "one of nature's masterpieces" and "incomparable bravery" which we do not find in the portrait of the Count. Radiguet speaks of *gloire*—it is another of Madame de La Fayette's favorite words—feels at once that it will not do, and changes it to "extraordinary position." The seventeenth-century novelist can tell us exactly why M. de Nemours was a great man, but the modern novelist finds it very hard to account for M. d'Orgel's "extraordinary position,"

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and concludes that it must be due to family qualities and social gifts. His book is, indeed, an account of a "ruling class" which has retained its privileges but lost its function. The King and his court, which were the pivot of Madame de La Fayette's complicated hierarchy, have vanished. The royal tournaments and the great balls, where Madame de La Fayette's characters distinguished themselves, have been replaced by the Médrano Circus, the dance hall at the fashionable village of Robinson or a fancy-dress ball at the Count's town house.

The Count is charming but incorrigibly frivolous. Now "frivolity" is a key-word which occurs again and again. Radiguet excels like his great predecessor not simply in revealing the tormented feelings at work beneath the glittering social surface, but in showing that without knowing it, even frivolous people are capable of deeper feelings. In one of his characteristic flashes of insight he remarks of the Count:

"He did not analyse the motives for his preference for François. As a matter of fact, the reason was incredible, and the Count would have shrugged his shoulders if anyone had revealed it to him. d'Orgel preferred François to all his friends because François was in love with his wife."

It is the Count's "frivolity" which produces the climax. He gives a dinner party to discuss plans for the fancy-dress ball. Among the guests is Prince Narumov, a White Russian who has lost everything in the Revolution. His presence alters the tone of the gathering. He has really lived and suffered, and is therefore out of place in this excessively refined and frivolous society:

"As soon as dinner began, Narumov made every effort to be cheerful. Yet his presence chilled the other guests. No smile can obliterate the marks left by suffering on a face. They are not wrinkles; the man's eyes are the same; he does not necessarily look older. His transformation is deeper."

"Drama," wrote Radiguet in a warning sentence, "often centers 'round the least important objects. With what vast significance did it now invest a hat!" The Count tries, with incredible tactlessness, to dispel the gloom caused by Narumov's presence:

"Anne had rushed out of the room once more and now appeared in the doorway wearing Narumov's Tyrolian hat. He attempted a Russian dance. The green hat with a cock's feather and the confusion of folklores made almost everyone laugh. Only the prince seemed not to enjoy the turn.

" 'Excuse me', he said. 'That hat is mine. It was given to me by Austrian friends who could give me nothing else.' "

"A horrible chill paralyzed the whole company. In the uproar they had almost forgotten the presence of Narumov. He now assumed the aspect of a judge calling the scoffers to order, and reminding them of the respect due to misfortune."

The Countess sees her chance. In a desperate attempt to save herself from yielding to François and to cause a breach by letting herself down in his eyes, she decides to support her husband:

" 'No, Anne, like this,' she said denting the hat into a new and still more ridiculous shape.

"There were no limits to the embarrassment of the guests. Anne d'Orgel at least had his thoughtlessness, his excitement to excuse him. But the Countess's act showed a cold determination to go one better. After what Narumov had said, it was unbearable."

"She had been right in her calculations."

" 'See how he deforms her!' said François to himself."

Radiguet is careful to avoid an imposed solution. There is no formal ending to the book which can be compared with the Princess de Clèves' retreat to her convent. The Countess having failed to save herself by her confession to François' mother or her stratagem at the dinner party, confesses to her husband. Her success is no better. She cannot make him understand something which is outside his experience and which his incurable 'frivolity' prevents him from grasping.

WHEN a writer dies at the age of twenty leaving behind him a handful of poems and two short novels, it is decidedly difficult to make a definitive judgment or to speak of his place in the contemporary novel. This, however, should not prevent us from appreciating what Radiguet did accomplish. I have spoken of the disparity between him and the other young men of his age. His achievement becomes the more remarkable when we remember that he belonged to the age of Proust, of Gide's "immoralism", of Dada, and of jazz. In an introductory note that he wrote for *Le Bal du comte d'Orgel* when it appeared in the *Nouvelle Revue Française,* Jacques Rivière commended his work because it reintroduced "into the study of the emotions a measure and proportion which it would be dangerous to lose," and because it "reminds us of the grandeur of normal feelings."

The value of Radiguet's work does not lie least in the fact that it shows that the method of the classic novelists is still a perfectly adequate instrument for exploring the intricacies of contemporary psychology. It shows, too, that "normal feelings" are not an exhausted theme and that the study of them is by no means incompatible with the sort of psychological discovery which is always so highly esteemed in France. Finally, it suggests that the sacrifices which were certainly made when the inner monologue and other technical innovations were introduced may not all have been really necessary.

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The Quality of an Original and Penetrating Mind

LETTERS AND NOTES: Volume I. By Elinor Castle Nef. Edited by John U. Nef. The Ward Ritchie Press, Los Angeles. $4.

By D. BERNARD THEALL

IF ever the reviewing of a book some eighteen months off the press can be justified, in this age of making book reviews coincide to the day with publication dates, the justification is in this collection of the writings of an exceptionally perceptive and highly literate American woman. "With reading, as with living, we regret opportunities lost more than opportunities taken," says Holbrook Jackson; a chance observation during a hurried look through the London *Times Literary Supplement* some months ago put me on the track of this work of a great and original mind, and I write these lines to save others the necessity of regretting a lost opportunity.

Elinor Castle Nef was born in 1895 and died in 1953; during all her life she wrote incessantly—long, long letters to relatives and friends, diaries and journals, jottings of conversations with folk of all sorts and conditions, essays on books and reading, critical evaluations of writers and their works, observations on medieval life and economies. In her lifetime very little of this ever saw print, and this most fascinating and rewarding volume, made up of all the above-mentioned kinds of writing, is a memorial labor of love undertaken by Elinor's husband, John U. Nef, author and University of Chicago Professor.

Elinor Nef hated the cliché, so one hesitates to say that these writings reveal a mind to which nothing that is human was alien; besides, she looked beyond the human to the divine. With her primary interest in literature and the arts, Elinor Nef could take hours at a time for conversations with drug clerks, door-to-door hosiery salesmen, French milliners, Ukrainian delivery men and Jewish delicatessen owners. From all these came grist for the mill of her mind and typewriter, as it came equally from talk with Virginia Woolf, Richard Tawney, Jacques and Raissa Maritain and Robert Hutchins. Seldom, through the medium of journals, letters, and informal sketching out of ideas on paper, does there emerge the picture of a human being so intimately and thoughtfully interested in the doings and sayings of others.

And in their writings—for Elinor Nef was a lover and a devourer of books. Americans, she thought, do not appreciate their country or their culture, or the literature in which they might find explanations of both. Her friends were constantly being bombarded with demands that they read Ed Howe's *Story of a Country Town,* or Eggleston's *Hoosier Schoolboy* or *The Circuit Rider,* or George Ade's *Fables in Slang,* or Lucretia Hale's *Peterkin Papers,* or Clare Luce's *The Women.*

Although Mrs. Nef planned "her book" for nearly fifteen years, it is rather scrappily organized and often diffuse and repetitious. Certain themes and ideas, however, emerge constantly and strongly. The value of tradition and of habitual rules of conduct, of moral norms that are to be observed rather than changed to fit passions and moods of the moment, the evils of a life that is forced into patterns by high-pressure advertising or publicity, the absence of individuality in American life and business, the necessity of religion and of strong family life as indispensable to a national culture, the evils that come from a denial that truth exists, the fallacy of believing that every man's opinion is worth exactly as much as every other man's—to these things her mind is constantly turning, and she is urgent that her correspondents and readers understand the great importance and day-to-day relevance of such central issues.

Elinor Nef was a good deal of a Francophile and something of an Anglophile, but she was so because she saw in the life and manners of these peoples qualities that could be used to make America greater and to do away with some of its shortcomings. Some of her estimates of differences in national character are especially penetrating. I give only one, in somewhat condensed form.

One evening in 1936 the Nefs went to a small movie house in Los Angeles to see a revived Chaplin one-reeler called *Stage Door Johnny.* They arrived too late for the last showing, but offered the manager adequate remuneration if he would run the film once more—a matter of some fifteen minutes. But the manager was adamant: the show was over, and rules were rules. Later, Mrs. Nef writes:

> As we drove along I thought of the little manager who talked to me indifferently in front of the cheap movie theater. . . . He did not hestitate for a moment in his blank refusal; he would not stop to consider my request. His imagination remained untouched. He did not indicate the slightest impulse of sympathy for us as his fellow man—either for our eagerness or for our disappointment —- he showed not the faintest curiosity as to our interest in Chaplin's film. I can hear a Frenchman with a slightly amused, superior smile stopping in the middle of our discussion or business to ask skeptically: *"Quoi, vous l'aimez tant que ca? Vous y tenez tellement?"* marvelling moderately, possibly disagreeing, yet understanding very well. He would look us over with a spark of interest, size us up, give advice, express his opinion of Chaplin in general and of this film in particular. He would probably make a mental note to reconsider for his own pleasure Charlie's merit. He would rapidly turn

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over in his mind the circumstances; weigh the convenience or inconvenience of obliging us, make a rapid reckoning of the gain which would accrue; satisfy himself of the reasonableness of our request. And if he consented, it would not be because the favor was asked by someone rich or famous or influential; he would consent almost as readily for us or any other anonymous individual. Nor would the interview be a barren, literal exchange; there might be a joke, some bit of philosophy expressed. Each might learn from the encounter.

Seldom have I found one book whose author adumbrates, but in her very own way, the thought of so many others on the problems of modern life. Lewis Mumford on the necessity for small communities as a necessity of continuing civilization, Anne Lindbergh and Virginia Woolf on the difficulties of the woman artist or writer, Henry Adams on medieval unity and modern multiplicity, Newman on the frenzy with which we seek in magazines and newspapers for the shallow views of columnists and "experts," Chesterton on the need of an orthodoxy to live life to the full, T. S. Eliot on the cultural importance of the family, David Riesman on the "other-directedness" of Americans, Father Gerald Vann on the necessity for the recovery of nature and symbol, Louis Kronenberger on the more amiable foibles and failings of Americans—Elinor Nef has either anticipated them or re-cast the older ideas in a forceful new way. Even—to take a very recent example—many of the ideas of Walter Lippmann's *The Public Philosophy* are recognizably here.

One of the things we regret most about the deaths of those we have known well, Elinor Nef writes, is that we can no longer know what they think about this or that subject that interests us. It is so with this perceptive writer, whose comments we should like to have on, say, automation, or positive thinking, or the responsibilities of the scientist to society in the atomic age. One would give a good deal for her comments on the overblown fraud perpetrated by little Mlle. Sagan in the name of literature.

One would have liked, I suppose, to find that Elinor Nef had thought or had written more systematically about God and religion; a deep awareness of the necessity for both there certainly is. "Human beings cannot live without God," she writes, and "Nothing can take the place of religion," and yet again, "Common sense comes from knowing the world and loving God." This last observation is developed: "Common sense comes from knowing the world and at the same time ordering one's activities in a reasonable hierarchy which embraces the worldly realities of daily life and other no less real intellectual and moral realities and values." But when a friend asked, "What is your purpose, why do you live?" Elinor Nef could only look doubtful and answer finally, "Because I love life," as Edna St. Vincent Millay might have. Yet if one compares this book with Virginia Woolf's *A Writer's Diary,* one sees how much more healthily and honestly Elinor Nef faced the great questions that life poses.

A final word ought to be said about the exquisite form in which this book has been produced. Everything about it—binding, paper, type, format, and illustrations (there are a great many photographs and some reproductions of paintings or drawings that point up observations about art)—exemplifies the bookmaker's art at its very best.

The Mystery of Human Personality

THE SELF AND THE DRAMAS OF HISTORY. By Reinhold Niebuhr. Scribners. $3.75.

By J. N. MOODY

PROFESSOR Niebuhr has justifiably been regarded as the outstanding spokesman of American Protestantism. A distinguished author in the field of philosophy and religion, he has won favorable attention from many Catholics by his fairness in dealing with controverted issues and by his able defense of the role of religion in human affairs. Stricken recently with a serious illness and unable to carry on his duties at Union Theological, he spent his convalesence meditating on the mystery of the human personality. This important book is the result.

It merits close scrutiny from professional Catholic philosophers. Doctor Niebuhr has engrafted the thinking of Martin Buber onto the concepts of Orthodox Protestantism, and then has widened his survey by relating the result to the main currents of contemporary philosophy. Few will follow him in many of his conclusions, but all will be enriched by his challenge.

The author begins his volume with the "Internal Dialogue of Self." Finding the key in the freedom of the human person, he is critical of the identification of the *self* with mind that is characteristic of classical philosophy. Modern psychology feels it has banished the idea of a transcendent self as successfully as the earlier natural scientists felt they had eliminated God. This is a serious handicap and it leaves Freudianism pessimistic about extending any kind of social discipline to modern society. It also misses the reality of the free self, thus reducing the problem of guilt to the manifestation of neurotic guilt. Yet depth psychology has uncovered many of the complexities of the *self* which were unknown in previous philosophy.

In regard to the community, the individual is in necessary tension. From one point of view the community is the individual's frustration because the moral standards of the group are necessarily inferior, since the group can grasp no value beyond its own existence. At the same time the individual recognizes that the community is the fulfillment of his life and the sustainer of his existence. Modern technics have

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For Summer Reading

In issue after issue The Commonweal touches upon a variety of ideas, communities and personalities. Its impact is partially reflected in the columns devoted to letters "To the Editors." Here are a few of the subjects discussed by our readers in the communications columns in recent weeks: Children of Poverty, the Church in Argentina, Belief and the Writer, the Worker-Priests, the Challenge of Abundance, Catholics and the Movies, Trade, Aid and the Farmer, and McCarthyism Revisited.

Besides these subjects of continuing discussion Commonweal subscribers have recently read with interest considerable detail as to the lives and importance of a number of colorful personalities. Among these were Marshal Tito, Paul Claudel, writers in the Soviet Union, Nehru of India, Elizabeth Taylor, current Italian novelists, Thomas Merton and others.

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intensified this tension for they have both enlarged the extent of social cohesion and emancipated the individual from the close embrace of organic communities.

Finally, the *self* must search for ultimate meaning. This it may find in idolatrous religion, in religious nationalism, or in the pseudo-Messianism of Communism. History has shown that this direction leads to disaster. The alternatives are mysticism or rationalism, which the author finds basically similiar, or in Biblical religion, which alone preserves the importance of *self* and which alone comprehends the drama of history. It has the added advantage of coming closest to the data of experience.

In this first section, Doctor Niebuhr is generally parallel to many streams of contemporary Catholic thought, though references to the "Fall myth" and to the Virgin Birth as an afterthought are jarring notes. It is when he launches on his second theme that the divergence becomes more apparent. Here he distinguishes ably between the two components of Western culture, the Hebraic and the Hellenic. Medieval Christianity is a synthesis of the two that in the Thomistic form was the most adequate approach hitherto discovered. But it had grave deficiencies in its lack of appreciation of historical change, in its ethics, especially in the realm of sex, and in the establishment of papal political supremacy. The Reformation was a partially successful attempt to restore the Biblical element to primacy, but its heirs dissipated the advantage either by obscurantism—failure to keep abreast of cultural developments—or by the incorporation of contemporary illusions, as in Liberal Protestantism. Yet the future is hopeful for the resources of Christianity can be applied to the society of today—a task to which the author applies himself in Part III.

The entire presentation should be seriously examined. The Pope has urged us to study Protestant thought as a necessary step toward Christian reunion. Competent scholars might well begin right here.

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Suspect Diplomat

A DREAM OF TREASON. By Maurice Edelman. Lippincott. $3.50.

By SALLY Y. ORR

MAURICE EDELMAN is a Labor member of Parliament, one of the founders of the Council of Europe, and the author of three novels and several political books. He has used his knowledge of higher diplomacy as a basis for his latest novel, *A Dream of Treason*. The book tells the story of Martin Lambert, a deputy head of the news department of the British foreign office, who undertakes a secret task for the British foreign minister and several days later finds himself called a traitor for following the minister's instructions. In the meantime, the foreign minister has been killed in an airplane crash, and the only other man who knows that Lambert was merely following orders has been critically injured in the same crash. No one else can vouch for Lambert's innocence. When he is called to account for his actions, his superiors refuse to believe his story.

As an adventure story, Mr. Edelman's book is quite successful. The situation he has sketched is one of high intrigue, and he has inserted several emotional complications to give impetus to Lambert's desire to please the foreign minister and get a post abroad. But despite these elements, the book fails in imagination. Mr. Edelman does his best to make Lambert seem sympathetic by providing him with an unfaithful, alcoholic wife, and by introducing an eighteen-year-old girl eager to help Lambert find a new life. But the continuous flashbacks to Lambert's life with his wife bog down the story, and the girl he becomes interested in seems a mere wooden caricature.

For all this, Mr. Edelman is a good writer, and his story has occasional touches of color. He draws a skillful picture of Lambert and the foreign minister's wife sitting in the airport listening to the disabled airplane muttering in the fog, for instance, and be ably describes a village dance where a member of Parliament is trying to drum up a few votes. However, perhaps because of his eagerness to weave a tight plot and raise suspense, Mr. Edelman has forgotten an essential element of a good novel: interesting, plausible characters.

His liking for a fast-moving tale also led him to overlook another matter. He had the chance to write a modern classic, a thoughtful probing of a government official's dilemma: where does one's duty to his superiors end and his duty to his country begin? Is it ever right to leak a secret document to another country, even if the country is a friendly ally? These are questions that have been on the front pages and have stirred wide interest. But Mr. Edelman chooses not to come to grips with them, or at least fails in the attempt.

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